

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SOVIET LEADERSHIP CHANGES

1. FOLLOWING IS PRELIMINARY INR ASSESSMENT OF LEADERSHIP CHANGES ANNOUNCED BY BREZHNEV AT 25TH PARTY CONGRESS.
2. THE LEADERSHIP CHANGES ANNOUNCED BY BREZHNEV, MARCH 5, REINFORCE OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS RETURNING TO SOMEWHAT MORE RESTRICTIVE POLICIES AT HOME AND LESS ACCOMMODATING POLICIES ABROAD. BREZHNEV EMERGED WITH ENHANCED PERSONAL PRESTIGE, BUT, PERHAPS WITH AN EYE TO THE FUTURE, HE AND OTHERS PAID GREATER HOMAGE THAN BEFORE TO THE WISDOM OF COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP.

3. ONE OUT--FIVE UP: ALL MEMBERS OF THE LEADERSHIP EXCEPT POLYANSKIY RETAINED THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN THE POLITBURO AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT. TWO CANDIDATE

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MEMBERS WERE PROMOTED TO THE 16-MAN POLITBURO, AND THREE

FACES WERE ADDED IN THE RENEWAL, NOT REJUVENATION, OF THE LEADERSHIP. THE CHANGES DO NOT ALTER THE AVERAGE AGE OF 63; FULL POLITBURO MEMBERS STILL AVERAGE 66.

4. IN KEEPING WITH THE RECENT PRACTICE OF GRADUAL CHANGE, POLYANSKIY WAS DROPPED FROM THE POLITBURO BUT HAS EVIDENTLY RETAINED HIS SEAT ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND, PERHAPS, HIS AGRICULTURE MINISTRY PORTFOLIO, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. HIS DESIGNATION AS THE SCAPEGOAT FOR THE HARVEST DEBACLE, HOWEVER, MAY NOT BE WARRANTED; HE HAS TENDED TO BE FAR MORE PRAGMATIC IN SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO PERSISTENT PROBLEMS THAN HAVE HIS SURVIVORS. HIS DEPARTURE REMOVES ONE OF THE FEW LEADERS STILL IN THEIR FIFTIES FROM

CONSIDERATION FOR A TOP POST IN THE SUCCESSION.

5. POLITBURO CANDIDATE MEMBERS G. V. ROMANOV, 53, LENINGRAD PARTY BOSS, AND D. F. USTINOV, 67, LONG-TIME HEAD OF THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, WERE NAMED FULL MEMBERS.

--THE PROMOTION OF ROMANOV RESTORES TO LENINGRAD ITS TRADITIONAL PLACE IN NATIONAL POLICYMAKING CIRCLES. HE IS BEST KNOWN AS AN EFFICIENT MANAGER WHO RELIES ON STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO BOOST ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE. HE IS, HOWEVER, A STRONG CONSERVATIVE WITH RESPECT TO SOCIETY AND CULTURE AND A PROPONENT OF IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE AS A CONCOMITANT OF DETENTE. SHOULD HE MOVE TO MOSCOW IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE, HE WOULD BE IN A GOOD POSITION TO ADVANCE HIS CAUSE IN THE MANEUVERING FOR BREZHNEV'S MANTLE.

--USTINOV'S ELEVATION BRINGS INTO THE POLITBURO A LIFE-LONG SPECIALIST ON ARMAMENT PRODUCTION WHO HAS ALSO BEEN ACTIVE IN SALT MATTERS. HIS PROMOTION MARKS THE FIRST TIME IN DECADES THAT A FULL-TIME DEFENSE INDUSTRY MAN HAS VOTED IN POLITBURO DELIBERATIONS.

6. ELECTION OF AZERBAYDZHAN PARTY LEADER G. A. ALIYEV, 53, TO CANDIDATE MEMBERSHIP FILLS THE TRADITIONAL TRANS-Caucasus SEAT LONG HELD BY THE FORMER GEORGIAN LEADER
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MZHAVANADZE. ALIYEV WAS A KGB CAREER OFFICER IN AZERBAYDZHAN BEFORE BEING NAMED AZERBAYDZHAN PARTY FIRST SECRETARY SEVEN YEARS AGO. SINCE THEN, HE HAS BEEN ONE OF BREZHNEV'S MOST VOCAL ADMIRERS.

7. PRAVDA EDITOR M. V. ZIMYANIN, 62, WAS NAMED A CPSU SECRETARY; GIVEN HIS BACKGROUND, HE MAY WELL BE CHARGED WITH IDEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS, THE POST HELD

UNTIL NOVEMBER 1974 BY P. N. DEMICHEV. ZIMYANIN'S INFLUENCE WILL PROBABLY BE IDEOLOGICALLY CONSERVATIVE, BUT HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO SHOW SOME SENSITIVITY TO WESTERN CRITICISM OF SOVIET DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS.

8. THE NEW FUNCTIONS IN THE SECRETARIAT OF K. U. CHERNENKO, 65, ARE LESS CLEAR. A LONG-TIME BREZHNEV ASSOCIATE, HE HAS HEADED THE GENERAL DEPARTMENT OF THE CPSU SECRETARIAT, AN OFFICE SOMEWHAT LIKE THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT. CHERNENKO MAY BE READY TO STEP INTO PARTY PERSONNEL WORK IN PLACE OF CPSU SECRETARY I. V. KAPITONOV, WHO IS RUMORED TO BE THE NEXT CHIEF OF THE TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION (SHELEPIN'S OLD JOB).

9. BREZHNEV AND COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP: MIXED SIGNALS WERE EVIDENT REGARDING BREZHNEV'S ROLE FOR THE FUTURE. PRAISE OF BREZHNEV'S PERSON WAS INDEED LAVISH, BUT IT STILL FELL SHORT OF THAT ACCORDED KHRUSHCHEV, MUCH LESS STALIN, IN THEIR PRIME. ALL TOLD, TWO AND POSSIBLY THREE OF THE FIVE PROMOTED APPEAR TO BE HIS DEPENDENTS; BUT THE TIES OF ONE (ZIMYANIN) ARE CLEARLY WITH SUSLOV, AND THE OTHER (USTINOV) SEEMS TO BE AN INDEPENDENT TECHNICIAN.

10. BREZHNEV'S APPARENT INABILITY TO MOVE HIS PROTEGE SHCHERBITSKIY FROM KIEV TO MOSCOW ALSO MILITATES AGAINST INTERPRETING THE LEADERSHIP CHANGES AS AN UNALLOYED TRIUMPH FOR HIM. AT THE SAME TIME, NUMEROUS SPEAKERS ADDRESSED THE SUBJECT OF COLLECTIVITY, SUGGESTING THAT SHIFTING ALLIANCES AND MAJORITIES STILL DETERMINE POLICY. BREZHNEV HIMSELF WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF CORPORATE DECISION-MAKING, WITH 17 REFERENCES TO THE POLITBURO.

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11. THE CPSU SECRETARIAT, TOO, EMERGED FROM THE CONGRESS WITH INCREASED PRESTIGE (IT WAS MENTIONED FAVORABLY BY SEVERAL SPEAKERS INCLUDING BREZHNEV) AND THE LARGEST MEMBERSHIP SINCE KHRUSHCHEV. ITS 11 SECRETARIES (FIVE OF WHOM ARE FULL MEMBERS OF THE 16-MAN POLITBURO) WERE LISTED BY BREZHNEV IN APPARENT RANK ORDER WITH SUSLOV AND KIRILENKO HEADING THE LIST AFTER BREZHNEV. THIS CONTRASTS WITH THE POLITBURO, WHOSE MEMBERS WERE LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER AFTER BREZHNEV. SINCE THE SECRETARIAT IS USUALLY THE DEFENDER OF ORTHODOXY AND DISCIPLINE IN SOVIET SOCIETY, ITS INCREASED STATURE ALSO WOULD SEEM CONSISTENT WITH THE GREATER ORTHODOXY MANIFESTED AT THE CONGRESS.

12. POLICY IMPLICATIONS: ALTHOUGH IT IS PREMATURE TO SPEAK WITH ASSURANCE OF THE FUTURE COURSE OF SOVIET POLICY, THE THRUST OF BREZHNEV'S LENGTHY SPEECH AND THE PERSONNEL ACTIONS TAKEN AT THE CONGRESS STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT SUCH CHANGE AS OCCURS WILL BE IN THE DIRECTION OF MORE TRADITIONALISM. FOR WHATEVER REASONS, THE SOVIETS HAVE APPARENTLY FAILED TO TAKE STEPS IN PREPARATION FOR THE DEPARTURE OF THE AGED TROIKA AND OTHER SENIOR LEADERS. AND THE NEW FACES ARE LONG-TIME OFFICIALS FROM THE UPPER LEVELS OF THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY, WHERE A PREMIUM IS NOT PUT ON INNOVATION- AS A RESULT, OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT SOVIET DOMESTIC POLICY WILL BE SOMEWHAT MORE RESTRICTIVE AND ITS FOREIGN POLICY LESS ACCOMMODATING. INGERSOLL UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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